

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 045004
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S E C R E T STATE 045004

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS FOR AMB YOUNG

FOLLOWING REPEAT RIYADH 125 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO JIDDA 20 FEB 78

QUOTE

S E C R E T RIYADH 125

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO, SA
SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA

REF STATE 44005

1. SUMMARY. THE POSITION OF THE FIVE WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS
ON THE HORN OF AFRICA WAS DELIVERED TO CROWN PRINCE FAHD TODAY IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED IN REFTELS. DURING
THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION TWO POINTS EMERGED WHICH ARE CENTRAL
TO THE SAUDI POSITION: FIRST, THE WILL NOT RECOMMEND TO PRESIDENT

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BARRE THAT HE MAKE A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALIA FORCES
FROM THE OGADEN; SECOND, AFTER SOME DISCUSSION PRINCE FAHD STATED
HIS WILLINGNESS TO CONCEDE THAT IF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL SO
FINDS, THEN SOMALIA WILL HAVE TO RETURN THE OGADEN TO ETHIOPIA.
FAHD FELT IT IMPERATIVE THAT WE FIND A MEANS OF SAVING FACE FOR
BARRE AND SUGGESTED THAT THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WAS TO HAVE
UN FORCES TAKE THE PLACE OF SOMALIA FORCES UNDER A UN-ARRANGED

CEASE FIRE IN THE OGADEN. IN PURSUING THIS, HE AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO PRESIDENT BARRE THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT BE MADE BY BARRE INDICATING HIS WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OGADEN ON THE BASIS OF A UN SECURITY COUNCIL DECISION. END SUMMARY.

2. ALONG WITH TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS, I MET WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD TODAY TO DELIVER THE U.S. POSITION AS SET FORTH IN REFTELS. WE DELIVERED A COPY OF THE U.S. POSITION IN BOTH ARABIC AND ENGLISH.

3. WE WERE INFORMED THAT THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAD DELIVERED THE U.K.'S POSITION ON YESTERDAY. THEREFORE WE PRESUMED THAT FAHD WAS GENERALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE CONTENTS OF OUR POSITION. FAHD'S IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS EXTREMELY NEGATIVE; HE ASKED IF A WITHDRAWAL WOULD MEAN THAT THE OGADEN AREA WOULD BE OCCUPIED BY ETHIOPIA AND CUBAN TROOPS. I REPLIED THAT OF COURSE WE COULD NOT SAY POSITIVELY BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO ASSUME THAT SUCH WOULD PROBABLY BE THE CASE. HE THEN STATED THAT IF THIS WERE THE RESULT OF A UNILATERAL WITHDRAWAL, THEN TWO THINGS WOULD HAPPEN AND HE WANTED TO MAKE HIS PREDICTION A MATTER OF RECORD: (A) THAT THERE WOULD BE MANY REPRISALS WITH MANY OGADEN RESIDENTS MASSACRED AND (B) THAT PRESIDENT BARRE WOULD BE OVERTHROWN. HE STATED THAT THERE WERE MANY ELEMENTS WAITING IN THE WINGS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A BARRE SETBACK. HE THEN OBSERVED THAT AFTER THE OCCURRENCE OF THESE EVENTS, THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT; THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD SIMPLY TELL THEIR PUPPET REGIMES IN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA WHAT THE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE.

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4. FAHD THEN COMMENTED AT LENGTH ON THE OVERALL EFFECT OF A SOMALIA DEFEAT AND A BARRE OVERTHROW ON THE ARAB STATES AND THE HORN OF AFRICA. HE SAID THAT ANY FUTURE ATTEMPTS BY ANTICOMMUNISTS FORCES TO OUST SOVIET-DOMINATED REGIMES WOULD PROBABLY FAIL BECAUSE SOMALIA COULD BE POINTED TO AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE USELESSNESS AND FUTILITY OF SUCH AN ATTEMPT.

5. WE EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY DURING THE COURSE OF THE MEETING THAT WE UNDERSTOOD AND WERE NOT IN DISAGREEMENT WITH THE POINTS THAT HE WAS MAKING; HOWEVER, THE MILITARY SITUATION WAS OF SUCH A CRITICAL NATURE THAT THE ONLY ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED WERE A VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL OR A CRUSHING MILITARY DEFEAT. FAHD REPLIED THAT DEATH WHILE DEFENDING ONE'S HOME AND PERSON WAS PREFERABLE TO DEATH BY OCCUPIED FORCES; THAT THE OGADEN RESIDENTS, MOST OF WHOM WERE SOMALIS, WERE FIERCE FIGHTERS WHO LITERALLY WOULD FIGHT TO THE DEATH IN PREFERENCE TO THE ALTERNATIVE AS THEY SAW IT.

6. FAHD AGAIN REITERATED THE MINIMUM CONDITIONS ON WHICH SAG COULD RECOMMEND TO BARRE A WITHDRAWAL AND THIS INCLUDED THE SUBSTITUTION OF UN FORCES FOR SOMALIA TROOPS WITH AN IN-PLACE CEASE FIRE ARRANGEMENT BY THE UN.

7. WE POINTED OUT THAT SUCH MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF A SOVIET VETO AND HE SEEMED TO RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF THAT POINT. WE THEN SUGGESTED THAT HE CONSIDER RECOMMENDING TO BARRE THE MAKING OF A PUBLIC STATEMENT IN WHICH BARRE EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW UNDER THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN REFTELS PLUS THE SUBSTITUTION OF A UN PEACE-KEEPING FORCES FOR SOMALIA TROOPS. FAHD SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO MAKE THAT RECOMMENDATION.

8. AS A FINAL NOTE, FAHD SAID THAT IF UN INTERVENTION FAILS OR IS IMPRACTICAL FOR OTHER REASONS, THEN THE UNITED STATES MUST SHOULD ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IF WE ARE TO AVERT A DISASTER IN SOMALIA. THE ARABS, NEITHER SINGULARLY OR COLLECTIVELY, HAVE THE WHEREWITHAL TO EFFECTIVELY COUNTER THE SUPPORTT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE
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SUPPLYING TO ETHIOPIA.

9. THE MEETING LASTED APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AND WAS CONCLUDED FINALLY BY FAHD'S OBLIGATION TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF HIS COUSIN. EVEN SO, HE WAS THIRTY MINUTES LATE AS HE BECAME ENGROSSED IN THE DISCUSSION. WE TOLDE FAHD THAT WE WOULD KEEP HIM APPRISED OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND HE WAS APPRECIATIVE.

GNEHM

UNQUOTE VANCE

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NNN

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